



## PRESS INFORMATION

# AFTER REASON – PRODUCTIVE UNDOING IS A DIFFICULT TASK

## CHALLENGING UNIVERSALIST IDEAS FROM A POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

To mark 300 years since the birth of Immanuel Kant, the Goethe-Institut Brussels and Beursschouwburg are turning their focus to the legacy of the Enlightenment through a decolonial lens. Over one weekend, prominent voices such as Nikita Dhawan, Sonya Lindfors, Ana Teixeira Pinto, and Sami Khatib will explore the fundamental paradoxes of universalism and colonialism, including their enduring influence on the present day.

**17 - 19 October 2024**

**Beursschouwburg, Rue Auguste Ortsstraat 20-28, 1000 Brussels**

**[AFTER REASON - Goethe-Institut Belgium](#)**

*Brussels, 1 October 2024* – In 18th-century Europe, the Enlightenment movement promised universal ideals of freedom, equality, and emancipation through reason. However, we know today that this same era also brought colonialism, slavery, and other crimes against humanity. Philosopher Gayatri Spivak speaks of Enlightenment as a complex legacy that influenced both colonisers and colonised. While Enlightenment thinking was used to justify colonisation, it also equipped the colonised with the intellectual tools to turn against their oppressors and fight for their freedom.

The transdisciplinary series *AFTER REASON* confronts the painful aftermath of the Enlightenment through philosophy, art, and performance. Combining theoretical discourse and artistic interventions, it sheds light on the connections between contemporary racism, neoliberal dynamics, and a universalism-debate that urgently needs an update. How can Enlightenment ideas be reconsidered from a post-colonial perspective? And how can we effectively untangle the entwinement of historical narratives in today's discussions?

"Productive undoing is a difficult task" (Gayatri Spivak) – this event series by the Goethe-Institut and Beursschouwburg tackles this complex yet crucial task in the face of both historical and ongoing injustices.

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### **A Decolonial Conversation Fueled by Resistance, Undoing and New Futures**

In her opening keynote *Can the Master's Tools Dismantle the Master's House?*, philosopher **Nikita Dhawan** draws from her newly published book *Rescuing Enlightenment from Europeans*, reflecting on missed opportunities and ongoing dialogues between postcolonial theory and Holocaust studies.

In the performance *One Drop*, **Sonya Lindfors** examines the historical connections between capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism. Using the stage as a platform, the choreographer critically deconstructs Western theatre traditions and aesthetic ideals.

**Ana Teixeira Pinto** introduces her project *The White West – Fascism, Unreason and the Paradox of Modernity* examining how the notion of reason has been exploited in the context of the far-right's current resurgence.

The Brussels-based queer BIPOC collective **Fatsabbats** explores the cathartic potential of performance in a workshop, while She-Dandy **Sofia Bemepeza** leads a creative writing session centred on polyphonic aesthetics.

This November and December, a series of additional events will take place in unexpected everyday locations across Brussels. In response to the historical tradition of exclusive living room gatherings among Enlightenment thinkers, artists and intellectuals will come together for philosophical "pop-up salons" in public spaces. Moderated by Kantian philosopher **Stephen Howard**, with contributors such as **Thomas Khurana**, further details will be announced soon.

The event series will be held in English. See next page for full programme.

**All information:** [AFTER REASON - Goethe-Institut Belgium](#)

**Interviews with participants can be organised upon request.**

#### **For press enquiries please contact:**

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## PROGRAMME

- 17 October** 19:00 Keynote  
**Prof. Dr. Nikita Dhawan**, Professor of Political Science, TU Dresden:  
*Can the Master's Tools Dismantle the Master's House? Postcolonial-Queer-Feminist Dilemmas*
- 20:00 Opening Drinks  
 DJ Set **Prince X**  
 Catering by **Pacifique**
- 18 October** 19:00 Lecture  
**Prof. Ana Teixeira Pinto**, Professor of Fine Arts/Art in Discourse, Theory and Practice of Contemporary Art, Braunschweig University of Art: *When I Was President, No One Ate the Cat! The Reasons of the Unreasonable in Neo-Fascist Politics*
- 20:30 Performance  
**Sonya Lindfors**, Choreographer and Artist: *ONE DROP*
- 22:00 Artist Talk  
**Sonya Lindfors**, Moderation: **Moya Michael**
- 19 October** 13:00 Writing Workshop  
**Prof. Dr. Sofia Bemeza**, Professor of Art and Communication Practices, University of Applied Arts Vienna: *Chop Chop! Poetry is Not a Luxury - Poetry is Contamination*
- 15:00 Performance Workshop (by reservation only)  
**Fatsabbats**, followed by a discussion with **Sonya Lindfors**
- 19:00 Lecture  
**Sami Khatib**, Research Associate in Critical Theory at the Orient Institute Beirut: *After Unreason: Global Injustice and Legacy of Enlightenment*
- 20:30 Performance  
**Sonya Lindfors**: *ONE DROP*

### The Goethe-Institut Brussels

*The Goethe-Institut Brussels is the regional institute for the south-western region of Europe which features 14 locations. From its head office in Brussels, it contributes to strengthening the European integration process and convey European cultural diversity at a political and strategic level. Its cultural, educational and information programmes in Belgium promote exchange and cultural engagement, as well as interest in the German language, Belgium's third national language.*

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